

Closing a Healthcare Facility to New Admissions or Readmissions during the COVID-19 Pandemic:

Interim Guidance for Local Health Departments and Long-Term Care Facilities

Note: This guidance supersedes all previous guidance.

In response to an outbreak, closure of facilities to new admissions may be recommended as a standard part of Virginia Department of Health (VDH) disease control measures. However, any decision to close and/or accept new admissions or readmissions must be based on a risk assessment and tailored to the situation. The decision to close a facility to new admissions should be made in consultation with the local health department.

The following criteria should be met when making a decision on accepting new admissions or readmissions:

- The number of COVID-19 cases identified in the facility (staff and residents) is decreasing.
- No evidence of widespread transmission of COVID-19 in the facility.
- Facility is compliant with [best practices](#) for infection prevention and control.
- Enough space for [cohorting](#) positive versus negative residents, and an observational unit for new admissions is available.
- Adequate staffing, PPE, and other supplies.
- The facility has a plan to manage new admissions and readmissions.

While limited or temporary closure of a long-term care facility (LTCF) to new admissions may be needed when COVID-19 cases are identified, closing to new admissions for two full incubation periods (28 days) is not currently recommended. Due to surges in COVID-19 cases, there is a need to be able to move patients through the continuum of care, including from acute care into post-acute care facilities. **Therefore, there is a need to be flexible and only close LTCFs for a limited number of days to ensure an acute outbreak is under control and the facility has the resources needed to safely care for residents.** Local health departments and health care facilities will need to balance the important goal of disease prevention and control with the importance of maintaining health care bed capacity during a time of COVID-19 surge.

Please note that CMS has not instructed nursing homes/skilled nursing facilities to close to new admissions as part of an outbreak response. During the COVID-19 pandemic, CMS has relaxed some policies to better allow for the transfer of patients. Additional information can be found on the [CMS website](#) and [COVID-19 Emergency Declaration Blanket Waivers for Health Care Providers](#).